

IDAHO COMMUNITY TREES

A NEWS BULLETIN FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF IDAHO AND THE IDAHO DEPARTMENT OF LANDS—COMMUNITY FORESTRY PROGRAM

News You Can Use

No. 31 Summer 2004

When are there too many trees?

See page 2.

Coordinator's Column

Please Help Promote Community Forestry

In my past three columns I've discussed the proposed revision of the Federal funding formula that provides money to state community forestry programs. As a result of public input on the initial formula proposal, modifications were made and a new draft submitted to Congress. While much better for Idaho than the previous one, it would still significantly cut funding to our state, reducing the assistance we can provide to communities. The National Association of State Foresters did not approve the new formula and what will happen in Congress is currently unknown. I'll keep you informed as I learn more.

One of the key lessons in all of this is that we need to do more to promote what we do and let our leaders, community residents and clients know the benefits and value of community trees. There are many publications that spell out the specific financial values of trees as related to air and water quality, storm water runoff mitigation, and erosion control. There are also research reports on how trees are good for business, crime reduction, energy conservation and much more. In short, trees in our communities are not only pleasant amenities, they are a great investment, yielding about \$2.70 in benefits for every \$1 spent on planting and care over a 40-year period – a 270% investment return!

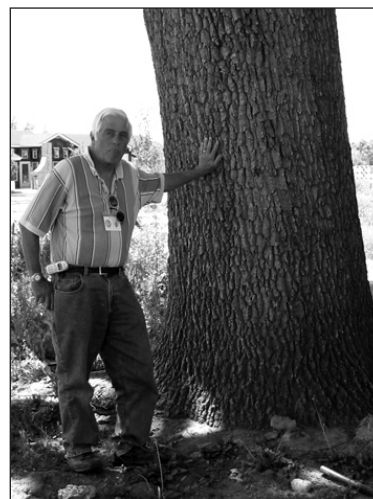
Too few people know this, however. Think about ways you can help educate people in your community about trees. Consider meeting with your council representative, mayor or state legislator. Perhaps you could make presentations to community groups; host educational workshops for citizens; write articles for your local paper. The more folks know the more likely they will be to support community trees, especially if they understand that trees are an investment with incredible yields.

Want some good research-based information on the quantifiable economic values of community trees in the northern mountain and prairie states? Get a free publication by contacting any of the folks listed in the masthead on page 2. And remember...let others know.

— *David Stephenson*

Community Forestry Coordinator

City forester Keith Atkins leads the many efforts in Eagle to preserve its existing trees and plant new ones. The roots of this large white oak were spared by using boring instead of trenching to install a pressurized irrigation pipe.



James R. Fazio

Eagle Values Its Trees

Eagle, Idaho is one of the state's fastest-growing communities. But despite its popularity and development activity, here is a community that appreciates trees – and takes action accordingly. This was evident to the Idaho Community Forestry Council as it toured the city on June 4 as part of its semi-annual meeting.

Eagle's tree needs were once served by a consultant working from Boise, but one year ago the city hired its first city forester. Keith Atkins fills the position and soon won a grant to hire an intern who is currently inventorying the city's trees and evaluating trees for hazard potential. Other activities underway are preventative spraying to combat lilac borer, pruning young trees for good structure, providing beautiful buffers along highways and assuring that trees are planted in new park, housing and commercial areas. Existing trees are protected by practices such as fencing during construction, tunneling instead of trenching in root zones, and altering foundation construction to prevent root cutting. The city also has developed an arboretum at the Senior Citizen's Center. In all, thanks to a dedicated city forester, a supportive mayor and council, and residents who value quality, Eagle is setting the stage for a greener, healthier environment where trees and prosperity go hand in hand.

Do You Have Too Many of the Same Tree Species in Your Town?

Noted horticulture writer Arthur Lee Jacobson recently listed in an issue of *PlantAmnesty* five groups of trees he judges as being overplanted in the Seattle area. They are: Japanese maples, katsura, kousa dogwood, *Stewartia* and flowering cherries and plum. Jacobson gave as reasons: “verticillium wilt becoming too common” in Japanese maples, “too thirsty” (the next 3 listed), and “boringly overplanted” for the little cherries and plums.

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For address changes, program assistance or additional information, contact, Community Forestry Coordinator, Idaho Dept. of Lands, 3780 Industrial Ave. South, Coeur d'Alene, ID 83815; 1-800-IDAHO4U = 1-800-432-4648 or 208/666-8621; fax 208/769-1524; email communitytrees@idl.state.id.us.

Field Offices

North Idaho: Sue Izard, C. F. Ass't., P.O. Box 10003, Moscow, ID 83843. Ph. 208/892-8543.

Southwest Idaho: Debbie Cook, C. F. Ass't., 3117 N. Penny Royal, Boise, ID 83713. Ph. 208/377-2938.

Southeast Idaho: Gerry Bates, C. F. Ass't., 2445 John Adams Parkway, Idaho Falls, ID 83401. Ph. 208/522-5964.

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Another good reason to make sure you have healthy diversity among species in your community is to prevent the buildup of insects or diseases to epidemic proportions, or the potential for devastating losses if a new pest should arrive in town. For example, when an entire parking lot, park or street is planted with a species of ash, the loss would be staggering if (and probably *when*) the emerald ash borer arrives from the Midwest.

A good rule of thumb is that no single species or cultivar should make up more than 5 – 15 percent of a community's trees. That same

rule might be a good guide for smaller areas as well, such as landscaped commercial sites or housing developments. A tree inventory will reveal if your community forest has adequate diversity. For example, Moscow's inventory showed that 18 percent of its street trees are Norway maples. Therefore, this species will be avoided in future plantings until its numbers are in healthier balance with other species.

Before planning projects, be sure to assess the tree diversity situation in your community and make decisions accordingly.

Help Available for Volunteer Planting Projects

If there is a volunteer tree planting project in your future, here is a \$29.95 investment that will make your job easier and help assure its success. The National Arbor Day Foundation has a product available called *Tree Planting Resource Kit for Volunteers*. It includes an 80-page leadership guide with useful checklists, a packet of reproducibles ranging from budget-planning sheets to handouts on how to plant properly, a *Celebrate Arbor Day Guidebook* that is full of great ideas, and a 20-minute video designed to motivate and train volunteers in proper tree planting techniques. The kit is available by phoning 402/474-5655 or visiting www.arborday.org.



Courtesy of New Plymouth News

New Plymouth Students Turn Out for Arbor Day

The *New Plymouth News* reports that “Mr. Barker brought a whole class of high school students to plant trees” and “the weather was gorgeous.” So it went as this Idaho community of 1,400 celebrated its fourth year as winner of a Tree City USA award. Other activities included Mayor Scott Moscrip reading the Arbor Day proclamation and, of course, lots of photo ops as 12 new trees were planted in Kiwanis Park. The tree selections were: Sensation (box elder) maple, London plane tree, Autumn Fantasy maple, and hardy rubber tree.

One Big Tree!

While some people destroy big trees in urban areas or replace them with 'lollipops' (small trees like flowering crabapples), the owner of this old giant took great efforts to save the tree. The magnificent specimen is a London plane tree growing next to the law office of Thomas G. Maile, IV in Eagle, Idaho. The diameter of this tree at breast height is nearly six feet and took four tree lovers to give it a hug! It is not only the largest tree in Eagle but the largest London plane in the entire state.

In this case, when the property owner did some reconstruction work on the building foundation, he altered the repair work to bridge the area where roots were present. The tree appears to be in good health and is watered by a nearby irrigation ditch.

To see a list of all champion trees in Idaho and learn how you might nominate one that breaks the record, visit www.cnr.uidaho.edu/extforest/BTList.htm.



The state's champion London plane tree is within the city limits of Eagle. Thanks to the efforts of the property owner the tree has been safeguarded for all to enjoy. From left, Gene Gray, Idaho Community Forestry Council member from Payette; Joyce Jowdy, IDL Grants Contract Program Manager; and Craig Foss, IDL Forestry Assistance Bureau Chief.

They're Logging Spokane — Is Your Town Next?

According to the Urban Forest Council in Spokane, "ponderosa pines are being logged from backyards in our town." Apparently some loggers use the off season to entice homeowners to let them remove large pines and earn some cash if the trees are large enough. This is said to be particularly attractive to individuals who plan to move in the future. The Council also claims that "some landscaping companies and tree services are earning a large portion of their revenue by removing native conifers from urban lots." Since the activity takes place on private property, only education about the benefits of trees can prevent the loss of healthy specimens.

Carrie Anderson, a member of the Council, suggests that anyone interested in this plight should visit the website www.saveourpines.org for more information. Her organization is also using an awards program to feature developers who value old native trees and do what they can to save them.

Calendar

August 3

Idaho Community Forestry Grant Training Workshops on the Idaho Distance Learning Network, 9:30-11:00 PDT at six locations around the state. Details will be mailed to all cities in Idaho or contact IDL Community Forestry at 1-800-432-4648 or communitytrees@idl.state.id.us.

August 7-11

International Society of Arboriculture Annual Conference and Trade Show, Pittsburgh, PA. (Contact: <http://www.isa-arbor.com/conference>)

September 17

Applications for Program Development, Tree Planting & Care and Community Transportation Enhancement Grants due in the Coordinator's office by 4:00 PM PDT. (Contact: IDL Community Forestry, 1-800-432-4686 or visit communitytrees@idl.state.id.us)

September 26-29

Pacific Northwest International Society of Arboriculture 25th Annual Conference — "Trees: Connecting the Past, Present and Future," Coeur d'Alene Resort, Coeur d'Alene Idaho. (Contact PNW-ISA at 503/874-8263, e-mail info@pnwisa.org or on-line at <http://www.pnwisa.org/conference.html>)

October 3-6

Society of Municipal Arborists Annual Conference, Denver, CO. (Contact: SMA at 706/769-7412 or go to www.urban-forestry.com/gpage.html)

October 28-31

Tree Care Industry (TCI) Expo, Detroit, MI. (Contact Debbie Cyr at Cyr@treecareindustry.org)

November 03-05, 2004

Best of the West Conference, "Healthy Forest, for Today and Tomorrow: The Role of Urban and Community Forestry," Salt Lake City, UT. (Contact: Sarah Griffith at 360/902-1704)

Upcoming Arborist Certification Exams

September 26, 2004, afternoon exam — Coeur d'Alene, ID

October 2, 2004, morning exam — Pocatello, ID

For information or to register, contact: Pacific Northwest Chapter, International Society of Arboriculture at 503/874-8263 or 217-355-9411 or email: info@pnwisa.org.



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University of Idaho

Department of Resource Recreation and Tourism
University of Idaho
PO Box 441139
Moscow, ID 83844-1139

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Tree tip

Don't Smother Me!

Trees in urban settings have a difficult enough time surviving without having unnecessary stress added to their lives. In the photo, not only has the trunk of this tree been punctured by nails for use as a sign post, a large area of its root zone has been used for soil storage. The entire area in the forefront of the photo is solid asphalt, an inhospitable environment for root growth and health. About 40 percent of the remaining root zone is now unusable. Two good reasons not to store soil under or near trees:

- ▲ Roots need oxygen. Even a thin layer of soil placed over roots, to say nothing of this large pile, will deprive roots of the air they need.
- ▲ When removing temporarily-stored soil, dozers or front end loaders are likely to dig into the soil and sever feeder roots that grow within inches of the surface.

FOR MORE INFORMATION: Contact the IDL Community Forestry Program (See masthead) and ask for a free copy of *Tree City USA Bulletins No. 8, "How to Save Trees During Construction,"* and *No. 20, "A Systematic Approach to Building With Trees."*

